8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 183 *anschauung*, in which all experience has a place in the logic of emotional associations. Thus one old fellow summed up a discussion of the sea creatures 181 which still haunt the western coasts of Ireland: "Everything that does be on the land is in the sea, 183 too, if we could see them". This world-view in- 821 corporates the world into the life the countryman follows and knows. To the same old fellow, winds along the Clare and Galway border that separates Munster and Connaught provinces could appear as the battles of fairy hosts, for do not men today still remember human battles and still taunt the men of the other province in joke and banter? The rustle of a breeze and the flitting of bats in a ruin where men lived and died is not mere noise; it is still part of human life. One old fellow described to me the experience of 'them' that he got at close quarters, when he lived near the ruin of Ballyvaughan workhouse:

"They were so plentiful there that everybody living round it and myself got so used to them that we wouldn't mind them at all. The place is full of them and everywhere you go there is a door and long windows in the cowl, and you hear them going in and out. There was a great lot of people died in it long ago in the bad times. They are in every room and you hear them on all sides of you. I got so 181 used to it, I never minded them at all, but I heard 183 them every day."

● 823 776 The great cliffs of Moher on the Clare coast are

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a landmark notable enough for many a legend, but the tales of it that best survive are those that relate it to the life of the present and express in the fairy-belief its danger to human life and property. "There's somebody lost," I was told, "off every bit of the cliffs. In the old days the men used to go down often [for wood and salvage]. They used to go down on their own ropes. . . . There was a fellow over in Liscannor who would go down at any time of day or night. He used to go down for lost sheep or lambs. One day a child fell off Aillena-searrach and he went down for the body . . . but when he came up he said he'd never go down again because every rock down below was covered with people sitting on it. People out of the sea they were. . . . Two little girls were lost looking for flowers the fairies put there to grow. The flowers aren't there at all, but are put there just to draw people over the cliffs."

Thus belief and rite in folklore conspire to a common end. They provide the countryman with a world-view in which his regard for things and scenes and events is charged with the emotional forces necessary in his social life.

But as we have seen again and again throughout our whole discussion, the sentiments he holds are organized first and foremost round his fellows: the members of his family, household, kindred, and the community. It is toward them that his habit is fashioned and in his relation to them that his social

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

312 788 955 778 strings of beads, rags or bits of clothing in the holy tree which often overhangs the well, so that it may bear their ailments. I happened to come across a well near Cork just after midsummer this year. Alongside were the smouldering remains of a great bonfire which had been lit on St. John's Eve. The visitors to the well, having drunk the water, walked three times sunwise around the corbelled stone well-cover, and taking up pebbles kept ready to hand in crevices, they made the sign of the cross on certain stones which were marked with deep grooves which generations of patrons had cut by the same process. Some wells have old "cup-marks" instead of crosses, and it seems probable that these pagan symbols were made long ago in the same way as the crosses which have replaced them. Their round completed, the visitors [825] looked into the well, for if they were to recover from their ailments they would see the trout which is reputed to live there and to show itself only to the cured.

The virtues of these wells are many: they are believed to be efficacious in such varied complaints as eye-disease, lameness, toothache and in some cases barrenness The first Sunday of each quarter of the Celtic year is generally the visiting time, but perhaps on account of the weather the summer festivals, and especially midsummer, are most popular. Pins and other bits of metal are sometimes deposited in wells. Offerings are also made to certain trees in the form of pins stuck in the bark, each pin representing a wish. Special gatherings known as patterns or pardons were held at such sites on the anniversary of the patron saint of the district. Devotions were followed by dancing and games which often degenerated into fights. It is possible to see relics of paganism in the sanctity of such sites, and it is worth recalling that some of the more celebrated centres of pilgrimage in western Europe, like Santiago da Compostella, seem to have megalithic connexions.

788 ● 823 778 The mention of cup-marks brings us to the superstitions concerning the great stone monuments with which they are often associated. A recent article in the *Ulster Journal of*

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Archæology (July, 1940) by I. R. Crozier and L. C. Rea, entitled "Bullauns and other Basin-stones," summarizes the various beliefs connected with cup-holes and the larger "bullauns", or stone basins, which the authors suggest were made in the same way by gradual ceremonial attrition. The water which accumulates in these artificial hollows is considered to possess special virtues, for instance as a cure for warts, and offerings of pins and coins are often made in them. It is significant that some of the basins seem to have served as fonts in the early churches. (Fig. III.) Small boulders

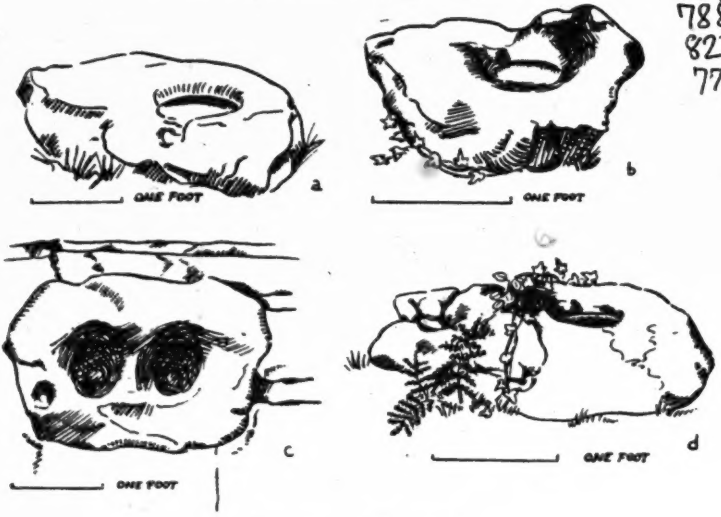

Fig. III. Bullauns.

(*a*) Portmore Church, Co. Antrim.
(*b* & *d*) Aghalee, Co. Antrim (basins on both sides of the same stone).
(*c*) "St. Columba's Font," Londonderry. (Two bullauns and a cup-mark.

lying in certain basin-stones are occasionally employed as cursing stones, the ritual consisting of turning the stones against the sun in their holes—there may be as many as ten in one boulder—at the same time uttering a curse against the offending person.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

788 823 778 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom, that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the [755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 776 [778] The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country: I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a [165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 [797] It has more than once been my experience to be refused permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a charitable explanation of the neglect from which many Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth [824] remarking that archæologists have often shown by their discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

like a basin; it contains almost a gallon of water; it is curious how it came there, for there is not a pebble of granite here."

The people of the same island keep as a special holiday the 11th of April, St. Leo's day, and will not do any work on it, while the inhabitants of Inishbofin do not observe it at all.

2. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many legends and traditional tales about places on the islands, of which the few which could be collected are given below; the main outlines only, in which all versions agree, are related, as each story was heard from more than one person, and the versions differed in detail.

Lough Bofin (The Lake of the White Cow).—A very long time ago, so long that nobody knows exactly when, Inishshark was a well-known island, and was inhabited; but Inishbofin was unknown, as, owing to enchantment, it was invisible. One day two fishermen were lost in a dense fog, and drifted on until they found themselves beside a rock, on which they landed and made a fire.[1] As soon as the fire touched the rock, the fog suddenly lifted, and the men found themselves on the shingly beach (now called the North Beach) of a strange island; on one side of the shingly belt on which they were was the sea, and on the other a lough, and close to them was an old woman driving a white cow down to the water. She drove the cow into the lake, and struck her with a stick, when she was at once turned into a rock. One of the fishermen, who had followed out of curiosity, was very angry at what he saw, and in his rage he struck the woman, and at once both he and she were transformed into stones. The rock and stones may be seen there still. The cow used to rise up out of the lake, and walk about the island when any great event was about to happen, but it is now more than thirty years since she was last seen. It is from this cow that the island takes its name (Inis bo-finne).

Carrig Guairim.—An old chief of the islands named Guairim (or Gorham), whose castle was situated just above Bofin harbour, had a dispute with the monks of St. Colman's Abbey about the payment of tithe, and, not content with not paying, he, with the assistance of a family named Halligan, took the settlement of the dispute into his own hands by seizing six of the monks, whom he slew by the roadside in Middlequarter, at a spot where their blood is said to be seen still on the anniversaries of the murder. Gorham did not escape unpunished for this bloodthirsty act; he was taken over to Rinvyle

[1] Another version is—"One of them knocked the ashes out of his pipe, for they had pipes then, though we do not know what they used to smoke in them."

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

began to sink.[1] Suspecting that the bell was the cause of their misfortune, they threw it into the sea, and the ship was saved. Next morning, when some of the islanders were searching for sea-weed on the shore, they found the bell lying broken among the rocks. This relic has long ago disappeared, having been cut up into pieces which were worn as amulets, most of which have been taken to America, but it is said that some are still kept as great treasures by some old people in Inishbofin, who refuse to show them to anyone.

Richard O'Flaherty, writing in 1684, makes mention of this bell ("H-Iar Connaught," p. 117) . . . "Inisark is of the same property with Bofin and the saint therein worshipped, St. Leo; of whose reliques is a bell there extant."

St. Leo's Foot-print.—There is pointed out an impression in the rock on which Cloghan Leo is built, which is said to be the imprint of the saint's foot, and the people's explanation of how it came there is, that when he had finished building the cloghan he had to leap down, as he had no ladder, and alighting on the rock he left the print of his foot upon it, where it still remains.

There is a tradition on the islands of a large treasure of gold being hidden on Davillaun (a small island of the Bofin group), on which a large vessel of the Spanish Armada was wrecked, and some of the people claim to know exactly where it is. There are also many stories about Lord Nelson, under whom several men from these islands served, and wild tales of the old smugglers; and a very narrow passage between two dangerous rocks through which a daring smuggler once steered his vessel, and thus baffled his pursurers, is pointed out.

Archæology.

Though making no pretentions to being an archæologist, yet as an inquiry of this sort would be imperfect without, at least, a partial description of the antiquities of the place, I hope that the notes hereunder given may, in some degree at least, supply the want.

1. *Survivals.*—In these the locality is comparatively rich, a good many old implements and methods of working, which have become extinct in other places, being still common. Such are the continuance of the use of plants and lichens as dyes, and some details of dress, such as the old blue cap, &c., which have been referred to before.

[1] One version of the story states that the ship had got as far as the Bay of Biscay!

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

The effect of the evil eye is much dreaded, and illness and misfortune are ascribed to it; for this reason, a child or an animal should not be praised without saying "God bless it," to avert misfortune. To counteract this influence, human beings may be spit upon, or the sign of the cross made on them in the name of the Trinity. Cattle sometimes have knot-charms tied to their tails. 777 789

Many animals have beliefs or customs connected with them. A fox should not be interfered with by the people in his neighbourhood, or he will revenge himself by raids on their fowls; if well treated he will do no damage. 825

Seals are thought by some to be enchanted men or transmigrated souls, and for this reason are not molested. A man at Portacloy asserted that it was unlucky to kill seals, and added, as a warning, that he knew a man, a relative of his own, who went into a cave to slay a seal, and on raising his club to strike it, saw the animal change into a large frog. He did not, however, seem to have any very great faith in his own story, as a few minutes afterwards he offered to sell a sealskin.

It is believed also that on some nights seals assume human shape, and that a number of them gather together on the rocks and wail aloud.

C. O. states that the people of Tip were reputed by their neighbours to be "peculiar" because they ate seals' flesh. [262]

The soil of Inishglora is thought to be so fatal to rats that if one of these animals be brought to the island it will die as soon as it touches the soil, and a handful of sand from the island will perfectly protect a house against this kind of vermin. [823] A black hen used, on some occasions (and may perhaps be still) to be buried alive with its wings spread out to bring about a fair wind or some desired good fortune. [821]

Ghosts and apparitions are fully believed in. Two instances of the spirits of drowned persons being seen walking about are reported to have occurred within the past year; one of these was said to have occurred near Blacksod, where the ghost of a sailor was seen on the sea-shore. An apparation in the form of a black dog is sometimes seen by belated travellers not far from Portacloy. About half-a-mile outside Belmullet and within the peninsula of the Mullet, there is a mound in a field by the roadside; this is raised over the bodies of some of the peasantry who were slain in a combat with the yeomanry (known as the battle of Meenane Creve), in the year 1793. At this spot the ghost of a young man without a head is seen sitting upon the 775

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

775 bank by the roadside; after a time it rises, walks across the road to the mound, and then vanishes.

The ghost of Major —— is reported to be sometimes seen riding a phantom horse at a spot near Carn, and circles on the grass are pointed out as marking the scene of his equestrian feats; he is also said to ride at times to Bingham Castle.

776 There is a strong belief in fairies, and many people are to be found who say that they have seen them. They are said to dance at night and cause fairy rings; they dwell in grassy mounds and travel from place to place, using stems of the ragweed as horses.

[822] The mirage which is sometimes seen off the coast is ascribed to the fairies if it assumes the appearance of boats or ships; they are believed to have been seen to land on the shore, haul up their boats, and vanish. Many stories are told respecting the impudent pranks of these beings, and to their revenge for some injury, disease in man and cattle is sometimes ascribed. A man may become paralysed or waste away and die from fairy influence as well as from the evil eye, but their malice may have a less serious ending, and may only produce some disfigurement. Some time ago a man was one day walking homewards, when he saw lying on the road a bright new razor; he picked it up and took it home with him, but after shaving [828] with it got *sycosis menti*, and the implement was then declared to be a "fairy razor."

[775] Women dying in puerperal fever are believed to have been taken by the fairies to act as wet-nurses, and infants may be "taken away," and changelings put in their places. The changeling may be got rid of by putting on a roaring fire and throwing him behind it, when he [372] at once vanishes in the smoke. The *ignus fatuus* is believed to be caused by the fairies to lead people astray.

The attentions of these creatures are not expended on human beings alone, for they may revenge themselves on those who vex them by attacking domestic animals. Cattle becoming ill suddenly are supposed to be "shot" by the fairies, and the owners will often go to a great deal of trouble to find a person who possess a "fairy [823] stone," which is the only remedy. These stones are treasured very carefully and are kept wrapped up in a piece of cloth; they are used by rubbing them on the afflicted animal, and repeating a charm or prayer. Unfortunately no specimen of these stones was seen, so it cannot be stated positively whether they are flint arrow-heads or not.

A farm-house at a place called Illaunglass, in the Mullet, has a tale connected with it, illustrating the causing of disease in cattle by

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

832 believed in, or at least spoken of, though not practised. It is called the spancel, and is thus described by C. O.[1]:—"This spancel, called in Irish 'stheioul dhrum agus tharragh,' signifying the skin of the back and of the belly, consists of a continuous band of skin taken from round the length of the body, viz. from the side of one foot up the outside of that leg and side, over the head and down the other side to the sole of the other foot, up the inside of that leg and down the inside of the other, until the stripe meets where it first set out; it is used as a love charm, and its power is believed to be irresistible, it being only necessary in order to secure the affections of the victim, to tie the spancel round him while asleep; if he does not awake during the operation all *must* turn out to the wish of the operator; if he does awake, he dies before the end of the year, so the poor desired one has no escape." The same author mentions several instances of this, which were said to have occurred shortly before he wrote (1841), one of which, the discovery of three young women taking the spancel off a corpse, is still remembered by some of the older inhabitants. There
312 are several holy wells in the district, but the most famous is the well
778 of St. Brendan, on Inishglora, the water of which is said to remain sweet and pure if drawn by a man, but to turn bloody and become
● 823 full of worms if a woman has the temerity to take it. Many tales are told of the misfortunes which have happened to women who persisted in drawing water from this well after being warned. There is now resident in Belmullet an old man who lived for some years on Inishglora. This man solemnly declared to the Rev. P. O'Reilly and the writer that he had three times cleared out the well after women had taken water from it, and that on each occasion it was "full of blood and corruption"; he also said that from the time he began to clean out the well until the job was completed no water flowed in, though it began to come as soon as the cleansing was finished. He added that if a woman were left alone on the island with only a male child of a month old, and she wanted to get water, the vessel would have to be held by the child's hand to prevent the water from becoming bloody.

[753] 2. *Charms and Leechcraft.*—Disease is often ascribed to supernatural agencies, and for this reason is often treated by charms or
755 incantations. There are several local "wise" men and women who treat disorders partly by means of charms, partly by herbal and animal remedies. In some cases the idea underlying the treatment

[1] "Erris and Tyrawley," p. 90.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

'deed of old' to delighted listening ears, but in language so ancient as to be now almost unintelligible to most Irish speakers of the modern school." The tradition of St. Brendan's discovery of America is well known, but the statement made by old writers about the supposed anti-putrefactive nature of the soil of Inishglora, does not seem to be recognised by the people of the district, who point to the bones among the ruins in disproof of the story.

O'Flaherty, in his "Ogygia," mentions the island in the following lines:—

> "In Innisglore on Erris shore,
> Should we the bodies of our sires explore
> We'ed find them blooming, fresh and fair,
> No human flesh can rot or perish there."

The Priest's Leap.—Just below the sea face of Dunnamoe, and separated from it by a narrow channel, is a large rock, which, tradition relates, was once part of the cliff on which the fort is built. It is said that once in the old times, some say the time of Cromwell, a priest was saying Mass at Tarmoncarra, when he was surprised by the soldiery. Not knowing whither to fly, he ran towards the cliffs and reached them at this spot, his pursuers coming close behind him. Just when all seemed lost the large mass of rock on which he was broke away from the cliff and settled down in the sea as an islet, bearing down the priest with it, comfortably seated, in a niche, known as the "priest's chair," sheltered from the bullets of his enemies. Thus protected he remained until night, when he was taken off in a curragh by his people. The place has since been known as the "Priest's Leap."

The Namhoge or Neewoge.—There was formerly on Iniskea a small stone figure called the *neewoge* (little saint), which was believed to have great power over the weather, and was accordingly treated with great reverence and used to be invoked for favourable winds. It is said that a pirate landed on the island, and after carrying off all that was portable, set fire to the houses, with the exception of the one in which the *neewoge* was kept, which did not take fire. Search was made for the cause and the image was taken out and broken. The *neewoge* never fully recovered this treatment. His power, though still great, was not the same as it had been.

Some years ago the attention of the parish priest became directed to the existence of this image, and having obtained the stone by a stratagem from the woman who was its custodian he threw it into the sea. As he died not very long after this, some of the islanders ascribe

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

OLD PISHROGUES

The whistle of the 7.15 now replaced cock-crow. But if it were indeed true that peasant values had perished entirely and that the rural population was transformed into the moronic cattle-herders of Filson Young's *Ireland at the Cross-Roads*, then this book could not have been written. Luckily a mountain farmer will still relate time to nature and refer to a moment of summer twilight, in a memorable phrase quoted by Dr. James Delargy, as 'the time when the dew was thinking of falling'. The wonder is that so much lore and so many relics of pre-famine days have survived. Yet the term 'old pishrogues' which is applied to all varieties of witchcraft and fairy lore—even if sometimes used in awe rather than contempt—shows that these things are now regarded objectively and are no longer an accepted part of social life. Superstitious practices tend to be carried out in secret and to be resorted to only when more rational methods have been tried and found wanting. Many of the old customs, however, have had their life prolonged by children's games, the seasonal bonfires and May Queens becoming their amusements.

Most of the pishrogues relate to fairies and to trees, wells and stones; and that these elder faiths have their roots in a very remote pre-agricultural phase of human evolution is attested by their very general observance among primitive people. As an example we may take the South African Bushmen, one of the lowliest branches of the human family. In a recent report from G. P. van der Post's expedition to the Kalahari we read that in the heart of the Bushman country there are sacred hills which are regarded as the home of very ancient spirits. Van der Post was told that 'right on the top of the central hill there was a spring of water and beside it a tree which bore the fruit of knowledge, and close by the tree a rock with deep marks where the greatest spirit of all had knelt to pray'.[1] The sacred hill-tops, the ancestral spirits, the well of water, the 'gentle' tree and the cup-marked stone are familiar themes in Irish folk tradition. Throughout western Europe, from the fifth century Council of Arles onwards, churchmen denounced those 'who offer vows to trees, or wells, or stones'. The great religions have had to come to terms with such cults, in Monsoon Asia as

[1] *The Times* (14th December, 1955).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

in Europe, and the emphasis on different elements of the complex naturally varies with regional circumstances and traditions. In Ireland the trees which the elder faiths had endowed with magic qualities were all small trees and shrubs—especially the rowan, holly, elderberry and whitethorn—and the evidence of archaeology and palaeobotany is that these plants first became common in the prehistoric landscape as weeds of cultivation following forest clearance by early cultivators. Thus they would have become symbols of the farming year, their white blossoms a sign of spring and the end of killing frosts, their red berries a token of the fulfilment of harvest and the promise of renewed life. At first sight one may wonder why the thorn tree should have been singled out for special attention, for it is ubiquitous in the lowland landscapes. The hedgerow thorns, of course, are newcomers, and they may be hacked with impunity, but woe betide the man who damages a fairy thorn, that is one not planted by man but growing on its own in the fields or on some ancient cairn or rath. They are to be found in every part of Ireland, but to see the fairy thorn in full majesty one should go to the naked hillsides where it stands in splendid isolation against the stone dykes and the bare hills (Fig. 89). As with the sacred groves of China, not even fallen dead branches which would serve as firewood should be removed. I have

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FIG. 89. Fairy thorns. A cluster of 'gentle bushes' near Slieve Gullion, Co. Armagh: 'If you were in there on the hottest day it would starve you.'

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

754 occurring on natural rock outcrops (Fig. 91), others ground into stone slabs resting on built-up foundations and termed altars, as at Inishmurray off the coast of Sligo. I have little doubt that they were the communal mortars of pre-Christian settlements. Their utilization as cursing stones continued into recent times. I was told of the example illustrated at Killinagh in Co. Cavan, that 'you would think twice before turning the stones, because the curse would come back on you unless the

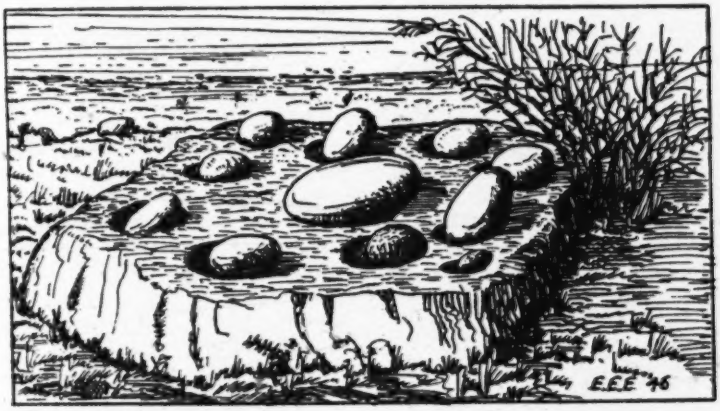

FIG. 91. Cursing stones by Upper Lough Macnean at Killinagh, Co. Cavan. (For scale, the large central stone measures 15 in. by 12 in.)

cause was just'. At many holy wells curiously shaped stones 823 were regarded as having curative powers, and they were bor- 755 rowed for use by people too ill to visit the well. At St. Olan's Well, Dromatimore, Co. Cork, the rounds include visits to the saint's Cap and Stone. The former is an oval quartzite stone which rests on an ogham-inscribed monolith and which replaces one, removed by the parish priest a century ago, which was invested with magical properties. 'It was said to be an unfailing talisman, and was much sought after for various feminine ailments, particularly maternity cases. If worn on the head and carried three times round the church it was said to cure the most violent headaches and, in addition, it had the gift of locomotion in that, if removed to any distance, it unfailingly

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

returned to its original position.'[1] St. Olan's Stone is a boulder bearing impressions which are regarded as being the imprint of the saint's feet. Many such marked stones, including some which are clearly artificial basin stones, have been regarded with superstitious awe up and down the country and were generally interpreted as the result of a saint's kneeling or standing on the spot. It is natural to suppose that these hagiological interpretations were substituted for another set of beliefs which attached the virtues of strength, healing and fertility to cup-marked stones.

Not infrequently cup-holes are found bored through thin slabs of stones, and these 'holed stones' are invested with aphrodisiac powers. We have referred to the ceremonies associated with the Ardmore stone in Chapter XIX, and the practice of erecting a stick or pole in similar stones at one of the major festivals is recorded from other localities. Wood-Martin wrote of the Hole Stone at Doagh, Co. Antrim: 'Marriage contracts are still ratified at this spot, as country couples go there to signify their betrothal by clasping hands through the hole.' Again, 'at the holed-stone of Clocnapeacaib, county Cork, women were in the habit of drawing some of their clothes through a hole, when their confinement was approaching, to secure a favourable result, and a similar practice is followed in many other localities of women similarly situated drawing clothes through the perforated arms of ancient Irish circular-headed stone crosses'[2] (Pl. 15, 1).

Before leaving this subject I should refer to certain cup-marks which have been utilized down to recent times for the purpose of making stone balls for the game of 'bullet-throwing'. Played along the country roads, and now prohibited in Northern Ireland because it endangers traffic, its main home is in Co. Cork, where it is known as bowling. One will occasionally surprise a game in progress in the Belfast hills or around Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, and it is here that stone bullets were manufactured within living memory. The 'bullet-holes', three to four inches in diameter and an inch or two deep, are worn in the flat tops of boulders in the process of hammering into a

[1] P. J. Hartnett, *Béaloideas*, 10 (1941), 108.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 239–42.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

newly-calved cow should be milked on to a piece of metal placed in the pail. Offerings of the 'beastlings' were poured in the raths and at the roots of fairy thorns, to appease the fairies. When taking a drink out of doors, the old countryman will casually spill a portion of the draught on the earth as a complimentary libation to the good people. 'When a cow fell sick through fairy malice, it was formerly by no means an uncommon practice, in the west of Ireland, to devote the ailing animal to St. Martin. The ceremony was performed by letting a few drops of blood from the cow in honour of the saint.'[1] Cows which, for no apparent reason, are not thriving are said to be elf-shot. The elf-stones or fairy-darts which are supposed to have caused the mischief are prehistoric flint arrowheads such as can be picked up in the fields. One of the tricks of the cow-doctor who is called in, and who keeps a few arrowheads handy, is to produce one by sleight of hand from the flank of the ailing beast. Or counter-magic can be worked by means of a flint arrowhead which must not be allowed to touch the ground after it has been found. The cow-doctor uses sympathetic magic in curing calves believed to be suffering from intestinal knots by drawing apart over the animal's back the loose ends of a string tied in a complicated witch-knot or 'bat', of the type which comes undone when pulled. But as always he must work the magic correctly, for if the knot is not resolved another one is tied inside the calf.

Hanging in the byre one sometimes sees a flint pebble suspended on a string through a natural hole. It is a witch-stone, protecting the cows from milk-stealers, and it may owe its virtue to the flint or to its symbolic ever-watching eye. In the Ardenne a holed flint hung in the stable is believed to preserve the horses from nightmares,[2] and nearer home in the Yorkshire dales holed stones known as ring-stones protected the cows from the evil eye. 'Blessings on all that I can see' is the traditional formula to use when one enters a byre. An ill-disposed person could, merely by looking at it, 'blink' a cow so that its milk would yield no butter. The cow could be cured by burning under its nose a portion of the blinker's clothes

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 6.
[2] H. H. Turney-High, *Ch'teau-Gérrad* 53(19), 232.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

763 of Fortanne says that the coach was heard at the deaths of certain Westropps after 1873, but nothing happened after its last appearance.

The phantom of a coach and horse was seen not far from Corofin, at Cragmoher, not long since, but it is agreed that no death took place after the apparition. An equally vague story was told about 1870 at Attyflin by a very old woman, Norry Halloran, whom the sound of the coach pursued one dark evening for a long way, but it did not pass her door, and nothing happened afterwards.

IV. *Fairies and Fairy Forts and Mounds.*

776 MacCraith, in the *Triumphs of Torlough*, in describing the prognostics of the death of Prince Donchad early in the fourteenth ●823 century says that "lights shone on the fairy forts," and it has already been noted that the *sidhs* or fairy mounds were lodgings [538] of appalling apparitions, like Bronach when not at her proper residence in the lower deep. The *Dindsenchas*,—that early encyclopædia invaluable for everything but the reliable account of the origin of place names which it purports to be,—describes how a lady dwelling in such a mound sprang out at her would-be lover in the form of a dragon.[36] Probably such beliefs, and the consequent fear of irate and deadly beings in earthworks, have helped until recent years to preserve the residential earthen "forts," although the ring walls were destroyed with but little scruple. Nevertheless the son of a farmer named Nihill told me in 1892 that, after some days wreckage and removal of the outer wall of the fine triple stone fort of Cahercalla, near Quin, his father was stricken with acute pain, and only recovered from his illness when the work was stopped,—whence this interesting ruin has been preserved to the present day. A certain landlord, still living, nearly lost the use of one eye from the dust of an explosion when blasting a rock in an earth fort which was being removed, and this incident has upheld the faith and fear of the fairies in north-eastern Clare. A locally famous "astronomer" and weather prophet tried, many years ago, to blast a dolmen in Inchiquin Barony, and a splinter hit his hand, which was badly injured and

[36] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv., p. 441.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

afterwards festered. The wreckage of the dolmen was lying untouched on the ground a few years ago. The collapse of a calf shed on its occupants followed the demolition of Templenaraha oratory for building the unstable structure;[37] this might be ascribed to a more sacred anger than that of the fairies, but the oratory stood in a ring fort. Another case of supposed vengeance occurred near Lehinch on the Atlantic. Some workmen were employed to level the earthworks of Dooneeva,[38] a fort on a low cliff at the end of the bay and near the modern Protestant Church. The man who originated this outrage was digging at the mounds when he fell to all appearance dead. The news was at once taken to his wife, a reputed "wise woman," and she ran to a "fairy spot" and "did magic." She then went to her apparently lifeless husband, and ordered the fairies in a peremptory way to restore him at once and take his stick. Then, before everyone, the stick vanished, and the "dead man" sat up none the worse for his "rapture to the land of faëry."[39] The date of this event could not be fixed, but it seems to be attributed to the period before 1840, and Dooneeva seems to have been in its present condition in 1839.

Two forts named Lissardcarney and Ballyhee in Templemaley Parish were in 1839 reputed strongholds garrisoned by troops of fairies. The songs of the fairies were heard in Cahernanoorane in Inchiquin, and Leskeentha near Noughaval.[40] They danced in the Lisnarinkas, played "hurley" in Lisfearbegnagommaun, and laid in wait to worry the belated traveller in Rathfollane and a small fort near the rectory, to the south of it, near Newmarket-on-Fergus. Fairies haunted the well of Tobesheefra, while even at the holy well of the powerful and vengeful St. Mochulla at Fortanne milk was once offered to them. The butter had refused to "come," and the mistress of the house, (a Protestant woman of good birth and fair education), as she told me herself about 1878, took some of the refractory milk to the well, made the sign

[37] Told to Dr. G. U. MacNamara about 1907.

[38] *Not* Doonmeeve as on the Ordnance Survey maps.

[39] Told to Miss Diana Parkinson. I heard it locally, but more vaguely, in 1907.

[40] Local traditions, 1904, 1908.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

776 of the cross over it, said the Lord's Prayer, dug a hole in the mud
823 at the well with her left heel, and went away without looking back.
[788] As might have been expected, the butter had "come" by the time she had got home again, and she used to quote the case as "proof positive." Besides the forts and wells, the dolmens are believed to have been fairy homes, but in my enquiries since
776 1892 I have never been able to authenticate a case of offerings
782 at them of milk and butter, although small basins like the Swedish
823 "elf mills" are found in the covers of more than one of these structures, and large *bullauns* or basins at others, such as Ballyganner Hill near Noughaval, Cappaghkennedy on the hills above Corofin, and Newgrove and Kiltanon near Tulla in eastern Clare. Food and drink, however, have been, until at least the present century, set out in plates and cups in Inchiquin and Moyarta Baronies, and in the latter, on the Shannon bank, the slops were thrown out and clean plates, water, chairs, and a well-swept hearth left by a punctilious servant for fairy guests in 1888 or 1889.

776 The greatest fairy monarch in Clare was "Donn of the Sand-
823 hills" (now the golf links), near the old castle of Doogh, (*i.e.* Dumhach or Sand Dune), near Lehinch. He, or one of the other fairy princes named Donn, appears in a list of the divine race of the Tuatha Dé Danann,[41] and is therefore of the family of the Dagda, and, it may be presumed, a lineal descendant of the ancient Ana, Mother of the Gods. A well-known Irish scholar and antiquary, Andrew MacCurtin, before 1730 addressed a political petition to Donn of Dumhach complaining, like most Irish antiquaries, of the neglect of the gentry, and praying for any menial post at his Court.[42] As there was none that answered, the petitioner had to rest content with the hospitality of the MacDonnells of Kilkee and the O'Briens of Ennistymon. Donn's heartless conduct met poetic justice, for he has ever since "lacked a sacred bard," and, save for a slight uneasiness in a few poor old people passing across the sandhills after the golfers have left and the sun has set, he is now all but forgotten. In another poem of MacCurtin's, on a monk's horse "overlooked" and killed by the evil eye, or by the look of a red-haired woman, or

[41] *Cath Finntraga* (ed. Kuno Meyer), p. 15.

[42] Mss. Royal Irish Academy, 23. M. 47.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

by "the stroke of a fairy," the poet recommends the holy man to get the aid of a local practitioner of renown, Peter the Fairy Killer.[43]

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In recent years I have met only one sign of true respect for the "Sheevra" race. A small patch of land was left untilled in the midst of a cornfield at the end of the steep descent from Carran old church to Eanty in the Burren. It was left for three years amidst the tillage, and then the field was allowed to return to grass. The owners obviously disliked to explain the matter, but the act was clearly understood in the neighbourhood as a concession to the spirits of the field when the grass land was broken up for the first time in human memory.[44]

The appearances of the fairies also seem now very rare indeed. At Newmarket-on-Fergus, a centre of much folklore, we find that, besides the two forts named above and a low earth mound (perhaps sepulchral), only one spot has been honoured by an actual apparition in the last ten years. In this case a man walking on the Ennis road, not far from Lough Gaish, saw a very little man neatly dressed in green and walking on the path. Suspecting the green man to be a *leprechaun*,—and hence an owner of gold,—the Clare man tried to grasp him, but the sprite vanished out of his hands.[45]

The "literary movement" will probably affect the folklore very soon, as it is already affecting historical tradition,—which is shown by the variations in certain legends collected at long intervals at the same sites. By some the Danann have been identified with the Danes as "fort builders." If this were so, why did Dane's fort become Caher Loghlanach, (Caher Loglin, 1652), and similar forms? The people once knew better, for forts were attributed to all sorts of times and races, not only to members of the Tuatha Dé Danann, but also to Firbolgs and mythical persons such as Aenghus, Eerish, Eir, Farvagh, and

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[43] *Ibid.* 23. K. 10.

[44] It was certainly not the darker belief that in Scotland dedicated an offering to the one called euphemistically "The Goodman," nor like the sheaf sometimes dedicated to Brigit and other saints in West Munster, or, indeed, in other parts of Ireland.

[45] Collected by Miss Katherine Neville. The sprite was, of course, proved not to be a *leprechaun*, as that being can be held by the eye alone.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

776 538 Croaghan, and Celts such as Lachtna (A.D. 820-840), and Brian Boru (A.D. 980-1014). In one notable instance, King Conor (A.D. 1242-69) is the reputed builder of the great stone fort of Dun Conor in Aran, which in the eleventh-century legend is evidently connected with Conchiurn or Conchraed the Firbolg,—a relation accepted in 1685 by Roderic O'Flaherty, although he called its hero "Conquevar" (*i.e.* Chonchobhar or Conor). Any modern allusion to the Danann is therefore "suspect." Many visits to the recesses of the hills in Burren from 1878 onwards,—and I may add that 776 the same is true of the rest of Clare,—only gave me, in 1905, one 788 direct reference to the Danann.[a] At the natural moat crowned ● 823 by the small stone ring wall of Croaghateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna, we were told to cross ourselves as a protection against the Danann. The place was, nevertheless, undoubtedly regarded by the older people living near it as a most dangerous fairy fort, and we were told how certain badger hunters,—(who brought drink with them), —after a long festival on its summit got benighted there; they eventually returned home sobered by fright, as they suddenly "saw the whole fleet" of "them" coming up the mound, and escaped only just in time.

776 788 821 The "whirlwinds" along dusty roads and sudden gusts were not long ago everywhere supposed to be caused by the progress of fairy beings. The older folk believed, and trembled,—crossing themselves, or saying a word of prayer,—while the younger folk, more than half in jest, raised their hats, as is still sometimes done to the unlucky "single magpie" and the weasel.

776 I know of two cases of reputed changelings. My second sister, whose delicacy, when an infant, excited remark, was, about 1842, taken out by a servant to be exposed on a shovel on the doorstep at Carnelly. The angry and hasty intervention of another servant saved the child, but the would-be "exposer" was convinced of the propriety of her attempt "to get back the real child" from the fairies. A very old woman, Kate (Geerin) Molony, a henwife at Maryfort, near Tulla, whom I faintly remember in 1869, was many years before anxious about her little daughter's failing health, and went to a "wise woman," who assured her that the child was "changed." She spoke of this on her return, and unfortunately

[a] Apart from Lon, at Slievnaglasha, and the "hags."

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

773 776 reddened all the lake. As the wounded being floated away she wailed :—

"As the water maid floats weak and bloodless down the stream
So the O'Briens shall go from Killone."

Prof. Brian O'Looney heard in his youth, and told me, a tale nearly identical :—

"As the mermaid goes on the sea,
A wretched victim devoid of flesh and blood,
So shall the race of O'Brien pass away
Till they leave Killone in wild weeds."

The lake, like the stream already noted at Caherminaun, turns red at times from iron scum and red clay after a dry summer. [823] This is supposed to be caused by the local Undine's blood, and to foretell a change of occupants in Newhall. Strange to say, I saw it happen last when the place was let by the MacDonnells to the O'Briens. The cellar at Newhall has its outer section roofed with large slabs, and the inner consists of long, low, cross vaults. [342] In the end of the innermost recess is a built-up square patch, which sounds hollow, and is said to show the opening closed to keep out the thievish mermaid. There seems no evidence of any stream running underneath the cellar, but local tradition tells of a vaulted passage down to the lake.

776 [103] Sruhaunaglora (prattling brook), in Kilseily on the flank of the eastern hills, probably owes its name, as many brooks their legend, to the supposed talking of water-folk. There was some belief in mer-folk at Kilkee before 1879, but it has nowadays got touched-up for tourists. Such touching-up, however, cannot have affected the ugly, drunken, stupid *merrow* Coomara (sea-dog), who kept the souls of drowned sailors in magic lobster-pots in his house under the sea, off Killard, as related by Crofton Croker.[8] The *merrow's* power of passing through the waves depended on a magic cap, and a duplicate of it enabled his human guest to visit him.

The last reported appearance of a mermaid is so recent as the end of April, 1910. Several people, including Martin Griffin, my informant, saw what they are firmly convinced was a mer-woman in a cove a little to the north of Spanish Point, near Miltown,

[8] *Op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), pp. 30-58 ("The Soul Cages").

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

178 fires have been more numerous. Formerly bones were saved up
796 to crackle as they burnt in the fires, and even when this ceased
the pronunciation "bone-fire" continued. Magical rites con-
[789] nected with milk and butter were, very recently, performed
secretly at wells on May Eve (April 30th) as described later.

526 Other annual observances were sports which first included, and
527 then lapsed into, mere races. The *iraghts*, or gatherings, at the
175 mound and inauguration place of Moy Eir (Magh Adhair) lasted
down to 1838, and were still very faintly remembered by old
people in 1890 as having died out in the Famine years, with so
much of the social brightness of the people. I may note that this
place,—the reputed seat of Adhar, a Firbolg prince, about the
beginning of our era,—became the place of inauguration of the
native princes of Thomond from before 877, and continued so
down, at least, to 1570. The name Magh Adhair (phonetically
Moy Eir) at first covered the whole central plain of east Clare, but
steadily shrank to that of a small tribal territory, and then, in
1584 and 1655, to the two townlands of Corbally and Toonagh
(Tuanagh-moyree). By 1838 it was attached only to two fields,—
"Moyross, or Moyree, parks,"—in the former, and is now confined
to a single field, "Moyars Park," and to the "rath" or mound
in Toonagh, across the brook. Notices of the inaugurations are
numerous from 1275 to 1311, and occur sporadically from 877
onwards. Other and less famous gatherings were at Creganenagh
("Fair or Assembly Crag")[1] on the bare hill over Termon in the
Burren, and at a field in Caherminaun near Kilfenora. The latter
probably gave the name Ballykinvarga, (Baile-cinn-mharghaidh in
1380), *i.e.* "head of the market," to the adjacent townland, and
may have been connected with the remarkable ring wall, girt with
a wide abattis of pillar stones, not far distant. Some forgotten
assembly is commemorated at Eanty ("Fairs" or "gatherings")
in the east of Burren. Other assemblages will be dealt with later
under XVI. *Patterns.*

XV. *Wells and Well Customs.*

823 Hesitation in questioning poor people too closely about their
religious feelings and rites has, I fear, rendered my notes on this

[1] Aenach was not merely a fair, but an assembly for merrymaking, consultation, etc.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

important subject somewhat bald. The pagan Irish, of course, reverenced wells, and the famous "King of the Waters" in Mayo was connected with St. Patrick by early biographers.[9] With the usual wise tactfulness of the ancient Irish missionaries all that was harmless was adopted into the new religion, and the wells lost none of their old observances and honour. The dedications of the Clare wells form a most valuable record, for, even when the founder of the church was forgotten, or a new patron invoked, the well usually kept the name of the ancient local saint. Unfortunately since about 1850 names of wells have been locally forgotten, and a re-dedication, often to St. Joseph, is common. Strange to say, the noteworthy saints Enda and Luchtighern are forgotten at the wells at their churches. The early mediæval life of St. Senan, (Colgan, *Vita S.S.*, March), says that, when that saint was born at Magh Lacha, Moylough, there was no water at hand to baptize him,—a rare thing in County Clare,—so he told his mother to pull up three rushes, and a spring welled out. The tale was still told in 1816.[10] The life of St. Mochulleus (Mochuille or Mochulla), about 1141 tells us how that early seventh-century saint struck a rock near a lake to the north of Tulla and three streams broke out. The well dedicated to him to the east of Loch Graney is evidently intended, and *two* streams still flow from it down the hillside. Some have supposed the wells of Tobereendowny, ("well of the King of the Sabbath," or, as suggested by Prof. Macalister and others, "of the world"),—were dedicated to a pre-Christian deity. Tobereevul is dedicated to Aibhill.[11] The flooded dolmen, Tobergrania, is named from Finn's fugitive spouse, "Granny's bed" occurring also as a dolmen name in Clare. Among Christian dedications we have Tobercruhnorindowan (of "the creator of the world") at Killard, Tober Isa (of "Jesus"), and Tobernacrohynaeve (*i.e.* Tobar-na-croiche-naoimh, of "the Holy Cross"). To the Virgin are dedicated wells at Drimelihy-Westby, Kilmacduan, and Killadysert. Of non-local saints,—usually, it is probable, late dedications,—we find St. John has

[9] *E.g.*, in the *Tripartite Life*, ed. W. Stokes, among the early "annotations" of Tirechan.

[10] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., under Kilrush Parish.

[11] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 186.

823 [797] 776 823 778 [P 230]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

776 778 823 the wells of Killone and Tromra, St. Michael wells at Kilbrecan, Cappagh (Bunratty) and the Kilmihils, St. Augustine at Kilshanny and Gallynagry, St. Bartholomew at Toberpartholaun in Rath (Inchiquin), and St. Martin at Moyarta, Ballynecally, and Lemaneagh. All the dedications to St. Joseph are modern. St. Patrick did not enter Clare, but has wells at Correen (Kilnaboy), Clooney (Bunratty Barony), and Rossalia. The following list of wells dedicated to local saints may be useful for reference. *Brecan* (c. 480) has wells at Noughaval near Clare Castle (Kilbrecan), Doora, and Clooney (Bunratty); *Brendan* (date doubtful), at Kilmoon and Farighy (Moyarta); *Brigid*, (probably the Abbess of Feenish Island, c. 550), Kiltanon, Cappafeeaun, Finnor, and Coney Island; *Caimin* (d. 653), Iniscaltra and Moynoe; *Caritan* (c. 550), Kilcredaun in Kilballyowen, Kilcredaun near O'Brien's Bridge, and Kilcredaunadober near Bunratty; *Carrol* (doubtful), Kilcarrol, where a wooden image of him existed in 1816; *Colan* of Tomgraney (d. 552), to the west of that village; *Colman mac Duach* of Kilmacduach (c. 630), Kinallia, Oughtmāma (where "the three Colmans" probably originate in a confusion of texts), Teernea, Lough George, and Crusheen: *Columba* of Iona (d. 597), Crumlin and Glen Columbcille; *Cornan* (unknown), Kilcornan and Tobercornan in Gleninagh; *Croine* (unknown), Kilcrony and Liscrona in Moyarta; *Cronan* (probably of Tomgraney, c. 505), Inchicronan, Terryncronan, Killokennedy, and Corrakyle; *Dioma*, Kildimo; *Enda* (c. 480), Killeany; *Fachtnan* (doubtful), Kilfenora; *Flannan* (c. 680), Killaloe; *Imer* (unknown), Killimer; *Inghean Baoith* (c. 630), Kilnaboy, Commons, Glenseeade, Inakerstown, Killavella, Dulick (Templemaley), Kiltacky, Kilshanny, Aglish, Moy-Ibrickan, Magowna, Ballycoree, Shalee (two), Cullaun, Castletown (Spansil Hill), Dromumna, and Quin; *Kirin* (not Kieran), Kilkierin (locally Kilkereen); *Lachtin*, Kilnamona, Kilfarboy, and Stacpoole Bridge near Miltown Malbay; *Lonan* (c. 580), Killaspuglonane and Derrynavahagh (Kilmoon); *Luchtighern* (c. 550), Tomfinlough and, probably, Moy Ibrickan; *Macreehy* (c. 580), Kilmacreehy, Kilmanaheen, and Inagh; *Mainchin* (perhaps "St. Munchin," patron of Limerick), Kilmanaheen; *Mochonna* (unknown), Feakle and Moynoe; *Mochulla* (c. 620), Tulla, Templemoculla (Clonlara), Lough Graney, Lough

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Breeda, Miltown, Kilgorey, Fortanne, Broadford, Trough, Ralahine, Cragg, Lahardan, and Cappavilla, with perhaps, (if not of St. Molocus, c. 550), Moylough, Scattery, and Carrigaholt; *Molua* (c. 620), Killaloe; *Onchu*, Killonaghan; *Sanctan*, Dromline; *Screbann*, Clondegad and Kilmaley; *Senan* (d. 552), Iniscatha, Moylough, Iniscaeragh (Mutton Island), Kilclogher, Carrow (Kilmaduan), Erribul (Kilfiddan), Kilshanny, Killaneena, Cooraclare, Kilcredaun, and Drim (Quin); *Tola* (c. 635), Dysert O'Dea and Kiltola; and *Voydan* or *Braighdean* (unknown), Kilvoydan, Corofin, and Kilraughtis.

Healing Powers.—The *Ordnance Survey Letters*[12] mention the following:—Gleninagh well, which has a fifteenth-century well-house or "turry," cured sore eyes; Tober Cholmain, above Oughtmāma churches, sufferers from "the pearl," the films falling off the eyes at the third washing; St. Maccreehy's well, near Liscannor, eye troubles, which were also cured by St. Inghean Baoith's well near Kilshanny (even then nearly deserted), Tobermoghna near Clooney (Corcomroe), St. Senan's well on the cliffs south-west from Kilkee, Kilcrony well near Carrigaholt, Tobercuan in Kiltrellig near Loop Head, Tobershenan in Moyfadda, the Virgin's well at Templemaley, and Tober Isa at Corlack Glebe (Bunratty). Tobernatasha, ("well of the relic" or, as some say, "spectre"), in Kilmaley was shaped like a coffin, and delicate children used to be laid on their backs in it.[13] The black mud which gave its name to Toberduff cured sore eyes and swelled limbs. So did Senan's well at Kilkee; horrible to tell, the devotees,—down to 1875, at least, when a washing-tank was made outside the well-house,—used to wash in this, the only supply of drinking-water for the then fashionable watering-place. Toberlachtin at Kilnemona cured several diseases, its "day" being March 19th. Eyes were also healed by the well south from Newmarket-on-Fergus, and by the wetted moss of St. Mochulla's well near Tulla (the moss being put back to complete the cure). The latter well is said to have avenged itself, about 1780, on its landlord, who had dug away part of its enclosure, by rendering

[12] Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Mss. 14 B 23. 24, (Co. Clare), vols. i. and ii.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 183.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

his son and daughter imbecile. The son survived till 1853, and no other members of the family were affected after the well was restored.[14] The Newmarket well indignantly removed itself to its present site when "a dirty woman washed her feet in it," and it also gave her the complaint it usually cured. So, also, when the holy well above Oughtmāma[15] was offended, it closed, and broke out lower down the hillside, as the Sruhaunanaeve or "saints' stream," and the water of Killone well refused to boil. The Cunninghams, living near it, spoilt their cooking by using its water, though "they knew it would not boil." John Windele tells of other resentful wells in Cork and Kerry; for example, the well at Labba Molagga (Cork) ran dry when a woman washed her clothes in it, and at Maunaholtora the well near a dolmen ran dry, and its water refused to boil.[16] The Irish "Nennius" tells a story of ducks that could not be boiled because the water would not get hot while they were in it. In the last century a woman who drew water from a well and saw it did not boil found a fish in it. She took the fish back to the well, and the water then boiled without any difficulty. The mud of the dolmen or "well" of Tobergrania at Ballycroum cured sore or short-sighted eyes, and that of the bullaun or basin at Kiltinanlea church near Clonlara did the same. The well of St. Michael at Kilmihil was once powerful. Father Anthony Bruodin, a Franciscan and author of a history of his order[17] full of curious particulars about Clare before 1640, tells how "Lady" Mariana, wife of Thomas MacGorman, of the author's kinsfolk, had in 1632 long suffered from gout. The Archangel appeared to her in a dream, and bade her go to his church and dig where she should see rushes growing near it. Aided by her son and Dermot O'Quaely, the parish priest of Kilmihil, she found the well and was cured. Many other persons got similar relief, but there seems no tradition of any cures by it preserved among the people of Kilmihil.

Offerings.—It is right, on visiting a well, to make offerings of

[14] So Mrs. Connors at Fortanne.

[15] Pronounced Ooght-máw-mā. It is a weird spot with three ancient churches in a grassy basin on the flank of a terraced hill of bare grey limestone.

[16] Windele, Mss. Royal Irish Academy; Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. iii., pp. 765-9.

[17] *Propugnaculum Catholicæ Fidei*, 1665.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

778
782
823

small objects, only of value as homage. Rag offerings are naturally most frequent where there is a "blessed bush" at the well, but they are frequently hung on a bramble, or even, on the Atlantic coast, kept in place by stones. Rags abounded, with other offerings, at Gleninagh, at least till 1899, being tied to the twigs of an old elder bush. They were hung in quantities on the stunted old hawthorn at Oughtmāma well, and were found at Tobersraheen, at Aglish graveyard in Ogonello, and on the large fallen hawthorn near the basin at Kiltinanlea. They are often accompanied by rosaries, religious medals, necklaces and ribbons, broken or whole plaster and china figures and vessels, and glass, buttons, pins, and nails. Such objects are abundant at many wells, such as the little rock well in Glensleade between the largest Berneens dolmen and the road, Killone altar, St. Senan's well near Kiltinanlea (Plate XI.), Fortanne, Kilseily, St. Lachtin's well near Miltown Malbay, Kilcredaun, and a well of St. Inghean Baoith (stopped by a too zealous Protestant, but recently reopened and dedicated to St. Joseph) near Inchiquin lake. The almost disused dolmen-well of Tobergrania had in 1893 two rude crosses of laths tied together, buttons, bottles, glass, crockery, and a coin.[18] In 1889 Kilfarboy well near Milltown was frequented on Sundays and Thursdays by sick persons, and abounded in such offerings as bits of leather, crockery, and blacking pots. (I am not certain whether this note refers to St. Lachtin's well or to one near Kilfarboy church.) China and pebbles have been offered at Kilcredaun in a cleft beside the Shannon estuary, and pebbles placed in the "Font" of Doughnambraher in central Clare.[19]

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

(*To be continued.*)

[P 239]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date, for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far, are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses, deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain bo Cualgne* than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

Cattle.—Place-names give us little information save as to the custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time, Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking places),[20] usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun" or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders. Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Supernatural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.[21]

The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St. Forgas, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

[20] Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boulinrudda (red place), Boolinduff (black), Boulynamiscaun (of the dish), and Boulynagreana (sunny) at Callan; Booltiagh, Boolybrien, Boolynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknockaun, Boolyneaska (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Boultiaghdine in Kilnaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltiagh means "mired by cattle" not "milking place"); Boulynamwella (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Boolty-doolan in Killadysert; and Booleevin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare the name is rare, Boolynacaunk (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being the only one known to me.

[21] Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1.

[P 241]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

buttons, and broken crockery. Patients sit in the "chair" to cure lumbago. It is believed that the water of this lake cannot be boiled and that no one can be drowned by it, and sixty or seventy years ago cattle were cured by it. The beasts were brought in herds to the lake to drink, and were driven into it. If they turned to the right hand they would recover, but not if they swam to the left. It is said that on one occasion a cow sank, but was found next day grazing in a field beside the lake, completely cured. In consequence of drainage works, the water level has fallen, and the mud round the shore is too deep to allow the cattle to be driven through it, so on May Day every year, before sunrise, a little crowd gathers, of perhaps over 100 persons, to fill bottles with the water for curing cattle, especially of "the worm." The water keeps good till the next anniversary, and is also used to give a "good churning" and to clear a "garden" of caterpillars.[22]

In 1839 Lough Iona (now Eenagh) was reputed to cure sick cattle on Mondays and Thursdays.[23] In 1808 the smiths were in some districts employed to kill the cattle,—or rather to fell them for slaying,—and their perquisites were the animals' heads.[24]

Persons over sixty years of age are often firm believers in the charming away, or "taking," of milk and butter. The younger folk usually deny that they hold this belief, and, where they take part in quarrels caused by it, avowedly only do so to support their elders. Two families living in the south-east corner of the county had about 1890 a quarrel resulting in a serious feud, hardly as yet appeased. It seems that for about three years the cows of the first household gave but little milk, and that little so bad and unwholesome for pigs and calves that several died. Ordinary veterinary practitioners, and even the local "knowing men," did no good, so the farmer sought a "wise man" of renown in another parish. This sage directed his client to watch the local well all May Eve, and to let no one come near it till after midnight. The farmer and his sons hid near it, saw a man and a woman of the

[22] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. ii.

[23] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 161.

[24] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 359. The smith was a magician amongst the Irish, and the ancient *St. Patrick's Lorica* prays against the spells of "smiths, women, and druids."

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

suspected family coming to the well, and sprang out and bade the newcomers keep away. The parties quarrelled, and were reinforced, as the news spread, by all the women, children, dogs, and sympathisers of both families. At last guns and hay-forks were brought, and blood was on the point of being shed, when some one found that midnight had passed, and the contestants at once went home. The cattle gave good milk all that year, and the well was watched on succeeding May Eves with equally good results. The bitterness is said to have died out round the well some years ago, but is still apparent between the households in other matters.[25]

A charm to cure "slow churning" has already been described.[26] In 1892 a horrible case of stirring milk with a dried human hand in order to "bring butter" was reported from the Kilkee district, but I could never learn the details. A similar practice somewhat earlier, near Oola on the borders of Limerick and Tipperary, was brought to light after the death of a farmer by a quarrel, ending at the sessions, between his three sons for the possession of the ghastly object.

The method of "taking butter" practised near Craigbrien, to the south of Ennis, was to take a hair from the tail of each of the victim's cows on May morning, twist the hairs together, and dip them in the milk.[27] I heard of a protective knotting of seven hairs in each cow's tail near Edenvale in the same district, and of a magic dashing of water over the churn when the butter was slow to come,—an excellent natural aid in hot weather. The greasy substance called "May butter," lying on the grass with the dew, was used for milk charms near Clonlara. I heard of it more definitely at Kenry, County Limerick, where a woman gathered it in her apron, and a hare was seen rolling and rubbing itself in the "May butter"; the hare, when pursued, turned into a local witch. If you come into a house where churning is in progress, you should always "put your hand to the churn," *i.e.* give a few strokes

[25] So told to me by the late Hugh Massy Westropp, who, as nearest magistrate, had to intervene to keep the peace on more than one occasion, and was called up to the well on one May Eve.

[26] Vol. xxi., pp. 195-6, as told by the late Miss W. Westropp of Fortanne.

[27] So late Mrs. Stacpoole of Edenvale.

[P. 243]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

XIX. *Rocks, Caves, and Stones.*

133 773 823 *Rock markings.*—The strange marks left in the flat crags by the weathering of softer portions and of fossils have caused numerous legends. The dish-like hollows in the crags below the hermitage of St. Colman MacDuach, at the great "Cliff of the Eagle," in Kinallia, the name Bohernameesh (*bothar na mias, i.e.* road of the dishes), and marks like the footprints of men and animals all seem to have been seized on by the saint's biographers.[1] Colman, brother of King Guaire "the hospitable," of Hy Fiachrach Aidhne (the district round Gort), early in the seventh century retired to fast and pray in the wilderness. After a most austere observance of Lent, a companion monk yearned for meat, and Colman pitied him and prayed. The king's Easter feast therefore flew to the hermitage, pursued by the whole Court. Terrified by the angry warriors Colman again prayed, and their feet and the hoofs of their horses stuck fast in the rocks. The legend is still told in a form identical with that in the Life.[2] The servant is said to have died from the feast, and his grave is shown beside the Boher.[3]

Where Burren and Inchiquin meet, on the Glasgeivnagh Hill,

[1] Cf. *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick* (ed. W. Stokes, Rolls Ser.), p. 405.

[2] Colgan, *Acta SS. Hiberniæ.*

[3] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100 (Ms. Royal Irish Academy).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

the marks on the fretted rocks are attributed to the grey cow of Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha). It is a very lonely and impressive spot. Ascending at the beautiful waterfall of the Seven Streams in Teeskagh, (a curtain of silver network over a cliff, sheeted with long moss and ferns, with ledges white with anemones, in spring, and fields blue with gentians), the great triple stone fort of Cahercommaun is seen on the edge of the northern cliff, and the way passes another early enclosure, with ruins of huts, called Cahernaglasha, where the *Glas* cow was stabled and her seven keepers lived. The highest point of Slievenaglasha,—rising 700 feet above the sea, which is visible far to the west,—has fourteen cairns and overlooks a long shallow valley, with strange brown patches here and there and another strong ring wall over a little cave. The patches are the *labbas* or beds of the *Glas* and her calf, the waterfall sprang from the abundant milk of the cow, and the fort is Mohernagartan ("the smith's fort"), the residence of Lon the Smith. The footprints of the wonderful animal and of Lon's seven sons are visible on every crag, and the cave with strange cinder-like débris is the reputed forge of the "dark brown Luno" of (Macpherson's) Ossian.[4]

At Ballynahown in Corcomroe, overlooked by the bold peel tower of Ballinalacken, are traces of the *Heanbo* (single cow), which differs from the *Glas* and gives its name to the Labbanaheanbo, a cave high up in the face of a magnificent cliff. In this bed the Heanbo will support the Leinster man who will win the freedom of Ireland in the last great battle. The cave is at the junction of three townlands, but is in none of them.[5]

On Scattery Island were two stones (still, I think, visible), one called Glun Senain because marked by the knee (*glun*) of St. Senan, and the other the stone on which St. Cannara[6] floated from Kilconry to the holy isle of the woman-fearing saint.

[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100. I gave the legend in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxv., p. 227, and it is still told in the locality.

[5] From Messrs. Kelleher and Hilary of Oughtdarra, to whose kindness and local knowledge I am much indebted. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] Vol. xxii., p. 332, n. 2.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Another knee-stone of St. Senan was beside the creek of Poulanishery on the opposite shore to Scattery. Between Dysert O'Dea and Rath Blamaic a rock with two basins bore the marks of St. Manawla's knees when she carried off the round tower of Rath.[7] St. Columba's thumb and finger marks are shown on a limestone boulder in the road fence near the lane to his entrenched church in Glen Columbcille. The bosses on the "plague stone" at Tomfinlough church were the two plague swellings torn from a woman's head and thrown against the stone by St. Luchtighern.

Not only the saints, but also Finn MacCumhail and his warriors have left marks on the rocks of Clare. A huge rock named Cloughmornia or Cloughlea, near Ballysheen and not far from Sixmilebridge, has in its sides long straight gashes where Finn and his band tried (or sharpened) their swords.[8] Finn's fingerprints are visible on a rock which was brought to Cullaun House near Quin early in the last century by the facetious Tom Steele from Birr in King's County, where it was seen by Thomas Dineley about 1680. The stone was called "the Navel of Ireland,"[9] and the V-marks are now regarded as the footprints of the cock that crowed at St. Peter's denial.

Hughey's Rock, a great boulder on the brow of the ridge between Edenvale and Rockmount near Ennis, bears the finger-marks of Hughey, a giant who threw it at another giant from Mount Callan.[10]

Caves.—I have heard at Newhall of a cave "between Ennis and Lisdoonvarna" in which runs an underground river that

[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 50. A similar legend occurs in the *Book of Lecan.*

[8] *The Battle of Magh Leana*, p. 30 (notes). The legend was still surviving at Ballysheen in 1899.

[9] *The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archæological Society*, vol. viii. (1864), p. 360. The cock legend is often represented on tombstones etc., and appears at Ennis Abbey (1460). In a version gathered by me in eastern Limerick, the cock says,—"I'm only a cock, and you're an apostle; but I'm the better gentleman any day!" In *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, p. 415, the Angel Victor in the form of a bird leaves footmarks on a stone.

[10] So told me by Shaneen (Little John) O'Halloran at Edenvale in 1869 and later.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

793
823

makes old people young. The exact locality is unknown, as the people who have gone to use it have never been seen again. Lismulbreeda cave, in Dromcliff parish and near the Kilrush road, is marked all over its soft sandstone sides and roof with crosses, figures, and initials, which it is considered lucky to cut on a visit. Horses are said to have come out of the Kilcorney cave, and left descendants in the valley below.[11] The caves of the Broc-sidh and Faracat have already been mentioned.[12] There is a tale of a wild boar in a cave some miles to the north-east of Feakle.

Dolmens.—These were supposed to be giants' graves, and, if called "altars," the word was understood in a Christian sense, with a belief that they had been used for the mass during the prevalence of the cruel penal laws. For example, Altoir Ultach was said to be named from an Ulster priest who served the mass there in the eighteenth century because the nearest magistrates were more tolerant than those of the north.[13] There is no evidence of any general popular belief that they were pagan altars, such an idea, where it existed, being derived from the "learned ignorance" of local gentry. The dolmens were, and are, called *leaba* (*labba*, "bed") and *leaba Diarmuid agus Grainne* (*labba 'iermuth a'us graunya*) from the elopement of those famous lovers. Legend on the west coast of Clare told that Diarmuid, finding that Finn could learn all the movements of his wife by biting his prophetic thumb, put seaweed on the cover of the dolmen. Finn, finding that seaweed was over the lovers, imagined

[11] This cave was famous in the eighteenth century for throwing out floods of water full of fish—(cf. *inter alia*, Gough's *Camden*),—and this is remembered traditionally, although the floods have been rare and insignificant since 1833. Other similar phenomena are recorded in Irish annals; *e.g.* in the Ulster Annals in 759 "Bennmuilt poured forth a stream with fishes," and in 867 "a strange eruption of water from Sliabh Cualann with little black fishes."

[12] Vol. xxi., pp. 180, 183, 479. The Faracat, according to *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh*, was a monstrous cat having a crescent on its forehead and a sharp nail in its tail.

[13] In fact, the Westropps, Drews, and Patersons acted as trustees under friendly "Protestant discoveries" to preserve the properties of the O'Briens, Macnamaras, and Barretts from the hostile effect of the laws, c. 1730-90.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

that they had drowned themselves, and gave up the pursuit.[14] Possibly the legend originated the association of indecency with the Clare dolmens found in 1808 by Hely Dutton.[15] A girl would not guide him to the fine one at Ballygannor until assured that he was a stranger, for, it was explained to him, a woman could refuse nothing to a man at one of these monuments. Some such reason probably lay behind the belief that, if a couple unblessed with children went to a *labba*, the defect in their household was amended. I have been told that this belief existed in Clare, but got no direct evidence of it. The Tuam an goskaigh monument in Ballynahown was believed to be the grave of a giant buried with his great sword, to recover which certain young men dug and overthrew the stones; but they found nothing, and afterwards prospered so ill that they had to emigrate.[16] Grania was supposed to be a male saint near Feakle, and the "scoop" in the west end of Tobergrania dolmen-well at Ballycroum was supposed to be the place where he put in his head to drink.[17] The long grave of Ballykelly, famed for its lovely outlook high over the woods and lake of Doon on the flank of Slieve Bernagh, was known as "Old Grania," but the term "Granny's bed" was not unknown in East Clare. I heard no legend of a "hag" at any dolmen. The alleged rites at the "Druid's Altars" at Maryfort and Carnelly have already been noted.[18] When two blocks of the latter structure were removed for use as gateposts, they returned during the night to their original site, and were never again removed. The hand of the destroyer of a dolmen near Ruan was struck by a splinter and severely injured,[19] the remains of the blocks being left where

[14] Corcomroe legend, given to me by the late Prof. Brian O'Looney.

[15] *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 318. On the Continent indecent names and legends are also attached to dolmens; cf. Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 555; vol. iii., p. 845.

[16] Messrs. Hilary and Kelleher of Oughtdarra.

[17] So among the inhabitants in 1896-9.

[18] Vol. xxii., p. 51.

[19] Told to me by the sufferer. His predecessor, who had overthrown some blocks, was also unlucky. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 212.

[p. 257]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

they lay,—but no vengeance overtook those who levelled many dolmens at Miltown near Tulla. 823 778

Basin stones occur not infrequently at or near dolmens, *e.g.* at Kiltanon and Newgrove near Tulla, and at Ballyganner and Cappaghkennedy on the borders of Burren, at the last of which five appear in one slab. In the Life of St. Mochulleus,[20] written in 1141, a basin "like a large *hydria*" was found in a polished block of stone when the saint was levelling the site of his church on Tulla hill. The basins were evidently regarded as very early in date even in the twelfth century. The basin of Doughnambraher (Dabthach nam brathar) at Kyleeane has already been noticed.[21] A large block with two basins is amongst the remains at the place of inauguration of the local kings at Magh Adhair.[22]

Pillar stones and rocks.—Boughils ("petrified boys") and *farbreags* ("petrified men") have been referred to in Section I.[23] A frog-like natural rock, close to the west side of the road from Kilkishen to Fortanne, was blasted and removed after 1887, but I have a sketch of it made in that year. There was a vague saying that it had been made, (and I think I was told also that it was a creature petrified when cursed), by some saint. The Coad stone is said to have been the same height (*com fhod*, "equal height or length," whence Co'ad),[24] as King Teige Acomhad O'Brien about 1460. It, the Cloghlea near Tomgraney, and the "cross" near Kilmoon were evidently boundary marks of church lands. Another legend of Coad [773]

[20] *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xvii.; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xli., p. 9. The basin was filled with milk by a hind. Similar legends are found in Glendalough (County Wicklow) and elsewhere. Giraldus tells how a hollow stone at Skellig used to be filled with wine for the sacrament.

[21] Vol. xxii. (Plate IV). The name is Killian on the map, but is pronounced Kyle-e-aan, with a long stress on the last syllable.

[22] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvii., p. 79, vol. xxxiv., pp. 190-1.

[23] Vol. xxi., pp. 183, 186, and the legend of Knocknafearbreaga on p. 185; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv. (c), p. 97, vol. xxvi. (c), p. 471.

[24] *Com-fhod* is also a synonym for a grave. [P. 258]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

823 778 stone was that the *liagunn*[25] was exacted by a father from the slayer of his son, and was the length of the victim. The story of Prince Lachtna (ante 840) tells that an adviser of King Phelim of Cashel tried to arouse his suspicions of Lachtna by an alleged oracle of a pillar stone Liag na neasain, near Killaloe, against "a fair man from Craglea."

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

[25] Dr. G. U. MacNamara. A *liagunn* of equal length to the slain son of the Dagda was claimed as an *eric* by the victim's father, "Dind Senchas", *Revue Celtique*, vol. xvi., p. 42.

(*To be continued.*)

[P. 259]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*concluded*).

XX. *Earthworks and Buildings.*

Fairy forts and mounds have been dealt with in Section iv., haunted houses in Section viii., and foundation sacrifices in Section xi.

Forts.—The ring walls and mounds in County Clare are probably residential, or, more rarely, sepulchral, but certainly not military. They consist of one or more walls (or banks), usually slightly oval, and the earthworks have fosses and traces of stone facing. They are named *dun*, *lis*, *rath*, and even *caher* (*cathair*), but the last name is usually reserved for the dry stone ring walls. *Ooan* (*uamh*) is used both for forts and for artificial caves in them, and also, for a fort-souterain, in 1317 in the *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* (History of the Wars of the O'Briens and de Clares). The country people have no limited views as to the makers of the 2400 forts in Clare. Croaghateeaun near Ballinalacken is attributed to the ancient deities, the Danánn, and one should cross oneself in entering its garth.[1] Mohernagartan and Mohernaglasha were made by the smith god Lon,—the latter for the grey "cloud and rain cow," the Glas. Oisin the poet lived in Caherussheen near Corofin, and the great stone fort on Turlough Hill probably belonged to the "Irish Militia" (Finn's warriors). Chonan, one of Finn's men, dwelt in the now levelled fort on Keentlae (*cnann tsleibh*) on Inchiquin Hill.[2] Three contemporaries, Crochaun (lumped hill), Dahlin, and Sall (the brine), made the forts bearing their names at Loop Head, and one at Cahernaheanmná near them for their sister the beloved of the hero Dermot O'Duine.[3] Oircheannaigh "of the golden cap" made the vast triple Moghane for his "fighting ring."[4] A giant dwelt in the promontory fort of Doonaunmore at Ballinahown who lost his magic staff and was

[1] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 345.

[2] "*Fris tighe chonain.*"

[3] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxviii., p. 351.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 281; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxvii., pp. 318 *et seq.*

[p. 260]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

slain.[5] Another Fhir mór (or huge man) was hunted from Cahermurphy stone fort to Kiltumper, where he was slain and buried.[6] Caherdooneerish was in the tenth century reputed to have been made by Irgus, a Firbolg, at the beginning of our era; it was wrongly attributed by scholars to Fergus, son of Roigh, but the peasantry never abandoned the name of the brother of Aenghus of Dun Aengusa in Aran.

Unlike some old schools of antiquaries, the people did not overlook the later origin of some forts, for they attributed the Grianan and Bealboruma to King Brian Boru (*c.* 1000), the former to defend his horse-paddock (*parc an each*) on the shoulder of Craglea. The fort of Lisnagry, in the heart of the hills near Broadford, was reputed to be the hiding-place of the great king's cattle from the Danes. King Croohoore (Conor) na Siudaine O'Brien (slain 1267) was said to have built Dunconor, the great stone fort in Inishere Aran which MacLiag's poem (*c.* 1000) attributes to Conchraid the Firbolg. The same king, we may note, executed the latest earthworks of a fort recorded in Clare history, at Clonroad, completing the royal *rath* commenced by his father and left unfinished in 1241. Some rebuilding of Dun Conor may quite conceivably have been undertaken in his reign.

To the fairy forts previously mentioned should be added Lissateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna. The people of Tulla had an observance by which the instigator of the destruction of a fort assumed the blame and freed the workman.

Churches.—The church of Clonlea once stood at the opposite side of the lake, near St. Senan's well in Killaneena, whence one night it travelled down the old lane that runs into the lake, passed under the water, and reached its present site. King Conor na Siudaine built Corcomroe Abbey, and, as soon as his five skilled masons had completed the beautiful chancel and chapels, he put them to death lest they should build a rival masterpiece elsewhere. This legend is now being transferred through modern guide-books, the careless compilation of which is a great source of corruption of our legends, to Donald O'Brien, the actual, but not traditional,

[5] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 205.

[P 261]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Senan "built seven churches and a beautiful high belfry" there, and how "St. Caimin, a vigorous chieftain, erected seven churches and a high belfry" on Lough Derg. Legend told that St. Senan, while building his tower, was interrupted by a woman, and left it unfinished.[10] St. Blawfugh (Blathmac) built two towers at Rathblamac, one of which was stolen and brought to Dysert O'Dea by St. Manawla. Of the bells of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy towers I have already told.[11] Kilnaboy tower was broken down by "the bombardment of Cromwell." The round tower at Tomgraney was faintly remembered, in Petrie's time, as like that on Iniscaltra, but it has long since been forgotten.

Crosses and monuments.—I have already mentioned the cross of Dysert O'Dea,[12] which was unusual in having portions of its carvings on separate pieces of stone, some of which are lost. The cross fell twice, and was re-erected by Conor Crone O'Dea in 1683 and by Col. Synge of Mount Callan in 1872; each benefactor died in the year following his restoration of the cross. The breaking off or fall of any portion of the monument of Sir Donal O'Brien, the first of the baronets of Dromoland, in Kilnasoolagh church, is fatal to his descendants, and so is any attempt to clean or repair it, tradition alleging that one of the O'Briens always dies in either case.[13] My own family believed that, if the family vault were opened, it had soon to be opened twice again to receive new occupants.

Underground passages.—One is said to lead from Cahercrochaun to Dundahlin on Loop Head, and another from the great promontory fort of Dundoillroe eastwards, where a brown track, probably an old road, still remains. A third ran through Barnagoskaigh to the Tuamnagoskaigh in Ballynahown, near Lisdoonvarna, where there is a roofed cleft of some length. A fourth went from Bealboruma fort under the Shannon; through it the angry Brian Boru sent soldiers to waylay and kill his slandered

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 18. The same tale is told of St. Declan and the beautiful perfect round tower of Ardmore, County Waterford.

[11] Vol. xxii., p. 336; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 144.

[12] Vol. xxii., pp. 57, 456.

[13] The fall of an angel not long before the death of the late Lord Inchiquin greatly strengthened the belief.

[P. 263]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

son-in-law the King of Leinster. Others connected Killone with Clare Abbey, and Quin Abbey with St. Finghin's church at the other side of the "Rine."

XXI. *Miscellanea and Addenda.*

Treasure legends and hunting.—Many forts have been much defaced by persons seeking treasure, though treasure legends are few. Caherscrebeen, near Lemeneagh castle (the Caherscribnib of 1551),[14] is said to be the richest fort in Ireland, having three rooms full respectively "of gold, deer's tallow, and *beor lochlanagh*" or Dane's beer (made by a lost recipe from heather and "the finest of all drinks").[15] Treasure-hunting is, so far as I have learned, in nearly every case in consequence of a dream, especially of a dream repeated more than once. No particular ceremony seems to have been used. The dreamer went, usually by night and sometimes alone or sometimes with a few friends, to the spot indicated, and dug until tired and hope of success was lost. Most of the damage done to stone forts and castles results, in the former from rabbit hunters, and in the latter from people getting material for other buildings. Silver (money) is believed to be buried in the mound of Lismehane castle, and near the curiously scribed rock of Cloch-an-airgid (rock of the silver) near Bohneill castle. I have seen in the field within Dunlicka castle,[16] near Kilkee, the holes made by a seeker who was told to dig where he saw a rush growing. "The great Clare gold find" in 1845, near Moghane fort, enriched archaeology rather than folklore. But the finders in some cases believed it to be fairy gold, and the people of Newmarket-on-Fergus tell that those who got it, with one exception, did not profit by it; the one lucky exception did not find his prosperity permanent. The only interesting treasure tale I have found is that of the townland of Skaghvickencrow (MacEnchroe's hawthorn), told by Dr. G. U.

[14] In the will of the last recognised King of Thomond, Murrogh, Earl of Thomond.

[15] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvi., p. 368.

[16] See also vol. xxi., p. 344.

[p. 264]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 [702] [648] The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

176 173 731 244 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely destroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough [437] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes [161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when [167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a [161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the [361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic [823] as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features 133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 311 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [574]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823 •
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

16 Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

823 [121] which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several [653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Ter[illegible]nd Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small 312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells, 663 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have 312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet [333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches [241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen 333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across [653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but [178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom. 333

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numerous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events. 311 241 103

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow. 103 823

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *curach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland. 504 505 [175] [178]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

3

The Village and the Family

Village Differences

361
103 LOW VILLAGE RECEIVES ITS NAME from its position on the lowest terrace of Inis Beag (see Fig. 4). It borders the ocean and strand, while High Village to the east is located in a wide expanse south of the common land formed by a concavity in the upper terraces. On the western of the two promontories high above the beach, separated from Low and Terrace by rift valleys, is Castle Village. Below it are the cemetery enclosing the church of the patron saint and the new school, and above it are the castle, the ruined monastery, the Napoleonic watch tower, and what remains of the old school next to the tower. The Ordnance Survey [138] [823] Maps place the highest elevation of Inis Beag in the vicinity of the tower, but the folk claim that the most elevated portion of the crest is above High. Terrace Village, on the promontory to the east, presents a breath-taking view of the lake (see Fig. 7), the sound, and towering mountains and cliffs along the mainland coast. Low merges with High, but Castle and Terrace, because they are located on high terraces and bounded by rift valleys, are isolated units. Terrace is aligned north and south, but the other three settlements are aligned roughly east and west. The southernmost house of Terrace and the westernmost one of Low are approximately 1500 yards apart, and the intervening distance can be walked comfortably in less than 12 minutes.

Below are the number of inhabited houses and the population of each village:

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	Houses	*Population*
Low Village	24	119
High Village	16	59
Castle Village	17	99
Terrace Village	14	73

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

776 787 [753] [562] [789] ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18 years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phantoms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

776 778 [823] [123]

763 776 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call. She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those persons considered overly superstitious.

[428] [123] 184 763 776 [522]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan supernatural varied among the folk.

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus (see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incorporating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a